

BARNEY FRANK
4TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

2252 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2104
(202) 225-5931

29 CRAFTS STREET
SUITE 375
NEWTON, MA 02458
(617) 332-3920

558 PLEASANT STREET
ROOM 309
NEW BEDFORD, MA 02740
(508) 999-6462

THE JONES BUILDING
29 BROADWAY
SUITE 310
TAUNTON, MA 02780
(508) 822-4796

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC

September 16, 2009

Editor, Roll Call
50 F Street, N.W., 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Editor,

The *Guide to Congress* contains a very serious error in describing the approach I am taking towards legislation to protect gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people against prejudice. Inexplicably, and wholly inaccurately, the authors say that "Frank and other gay rights supporters have warned against pushing too quickly, lest the backlash impede the gay rights agenda." That is wrong.

My view from the beginning of this Congress has been that we should act this year on a bill adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of hate crimes that are federally prosecutable, and that we should pass a bill protecting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people against job discrimination. Contrary to your writers' assertion, I have been pushing for action this year on both. The hate crimes bill is already in conference, and as I write we are planning for a hearing to be held very shortly in the Committee on Education and Labor on the Employment Discrimination Bill, with every expectation that it will be voted on this year. Repealing the military's policy of restricting the rights of LGBT people to serve is on the agenda for early next year, because we do have these other two bills before us this year, and to give the President a chance to set his policy regarding Iraq and Afghanistan in place before taking up "don't ask, don't tell." Finally, progress is being made in the Committee on Government Reform on enacting a bill which will provide full domestic partner benefits to federal employees. That I hope will also be voted on this year in the House.

Given the importance, and I believe likelihood, of our passing all of these bills into law to be signed by a president who fully supports them, I have differed with the sponsors of the bill to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act because of the provision which would recognize marriages by the federal government in states where marriage is not permitted between people of the same sex. But not even the sponsors are pushing for action on that bill in this Congress, and the central point is that with regard to these other four pieces of legislation, I have not counseled anything other than a sustained strategic effort to have all four of them signed into law in this Congress.



BARNEY FRANK

BF/la